**St Barnabas with Christ Church**

**(BLT)**

**Sunday Brunch**

**Sunday Tea**

**Sunday 14th February 2021**

**Sunday before Lent**



## Sunday Lunch - Prepared by Steve O’Rourke

## Collect

Almighty Father,
whose Son was revealed in majesty
before he suffered death upon the cross:
give us grace to perceive his glory,
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him
and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

**The Transfiguration -** Mark 9:2-9

**2**After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a hi

gh mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. **3**His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. **4**And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

**5**Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” **6**(He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

**7**Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”

**8**Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

**9**As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

**Reflection**

At the transfiguration, Jesus’ disciples see clearly who he is. They see his glory shining as he talks with Moses and Elijah. These two represent the Law and the Prophets, and in this way Jesus, the man they have been following and figuring out, is revealed as the fulfilment of God’s promises to Israel.

In the Old Testament, God spoke to Moses on mount Sinai and gave him the law for the people to follow. Now God speaks again but this time we’re told to listen to and follow Jesus. It’s a powerful moment which leaves disciples terrified and in awe.

The transfiguration reminds me that our faith is founded on a revelation of who Jesus is. He’s not just a good moral teacher, but is the glorious Son of God - the Way the Truth and the Life.

I think it’s worth thinking about who got to experience this glorious moment…

In the previous chapter, Mark 8, Jesus is on a different hillside, miraculously feeding 4000 hungry people. This could seem like the perfect moment to reveal Jesus’ glory, but that’s not where the transfiguration happens.

Later in chapter 8 Jesus is challenged by the Pharisees to show them a miraculous sign to prove his authority. This seems like another ideal opportunity. What if they saw his glory, doing away with all their complaints and doubts? But this is not where the transfiguration takes place. In fact he tells the Pharisees straight that they will not get the miraculous sign they are asking for.

When Jesus glory is seen, it is out of the way, with his few closest disciples, in the presence of two figures, Moses and Elijah, who for all their great significance are known for their intimate relationship with God. In Exodus, it says The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. (Exodus 33:11) Elijah famously heard God in a still, small voice. (1 Kings 19:12)

You will know a lot of people, they probably all have a pretty good idea what you’re like, but I expect there are only a few with whom you have a deep, close relationship. Only in those relationships that take time to form will you be truly known.

Drawing close to God is the same. If we want to fully see who Jesus is, it will almost certainly be as a result of time spent in honest prayer. For me, reading about the transfiguration is an invitation to intimacy and closeness and deepening relationship with God. Sometimes I’m like the Pharisees, demanding a miraculous sign on my terms. But it’s friendship that is the goal here.

At the last supper Jesus tells his disciples they are no longer his not his servants, but his friends. (John 15:15)

What would it look like for you to deepen your friendship with Jesus? We can think of prayer and worship as the place where God reveals himself - and this is certainly true - but remember that God often reveals himself in the wilderness, away from our structures and plans. I my experience this is true of physically and metaphorical wildernesses. Friendships take time, they are built on honesty, vulnerability and trust, but also on sharing times of joy and celebration. Life with Jesus is life to the full!

The transfiguration gives us a revelation of who Jesus is, but the invitation is to know him deeply and personally.

So, ask yourself today, what could you do to deepen your friendship with Jesus?

**A Travel Blessing**

May God, who is present in sunrise and nightfall
and in the crossing of the sea,
guide your feet as you go.

May God, who is with you when you sit
and when you stand,
encompass you with love
and lead you by the hand.

May God, who knows your path
and the places where you rest,
be with you in the waiting,
be your good news for sharing,
and lead you in the way that is everlasting.

**St Barnabas BLT: Sunday 14th February 2021**

Sunday next before Lent – Quinquagesima

Prepared by Mark Watson

**Tea:**

**Greater love hath no man**

**Preparation**

 The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night

 and a perfect end.

 **All: Amen.**

 Our help is in the name of the Lord**.**

 **All: Who made heaven and earth.**

 **All: Most merciful God**

 **We confess to you**

**and the whole company of heaven and one another**

 **that we have sinned in thought, word and deed**

 **and in what we have failed to do.**

 **Forgive us our sins, heal us by your Spirit**

 **and raise us to new life in Christ. Amen.**

O God make speed to save us**.**

**All: O Lord make haste to help us.**

**Glory to the Father and to the Son**

 **and to the Holy Spirit;**

 **as it was in the beginning is now**

 **and shall be forever. Amen. Alleluia.**

**Greater love hath no man**

**Greater love hath no man** is an anthem by the late English composer John Ireland (written in 1912) and which is often sung on the Sunday immediately before the start of Lent. It expresses the great theme of God’s love – as lived out by Christ in His Passion and Death – which we are now called to follow as part of His Body, the Baptized.

The title is taken from the *King James Version* of John 15:13 and the verse forms part of the words of the anthem:

”Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

The full words to the anthem are as follows:

**Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.**

**Love is strong as death.**

**Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.**

**Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.**

**Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus;**

**Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.**

**I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.**



John Ireland, Composer (1879 – 1962)

The anthem is an exploration of God’s love and our rightful response to it. All the verses therein are taken from Holy Scripture. I now reproduce these below, with the words used by John Ireland in his anthem highlighted **in red**.

[**(OT) Song of Solomon 8:7**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Solomon%208:7,6;%20John%2015:13;%201%20Peter%202:24;%201%20Corinthians%206:11;%201%20Peter%202:9;%20Romans%2012:1&version=KJV)

**Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it**: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be condemned.

[**(OT) Song of Solomon 8:6**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Solomon%208:7,6;%20John%2015:13;%201%20Peter%202:24;%201%20Corinthians%206:11;%201%20Peter%202:9;%20Romans%2012:1&version=KJV)

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: **for love is strong as death**; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.

Love: God’s irrepressible and self-defining nature.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states at the outset:

“God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created people to make them share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to people. He calls people to seek him, to know him, to love him with all their strength. He calls together all people, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Saviour. In his Son and through him, he invites people to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life.”

(The words have been slightly adapted by me to make the language more inclusive; for example, “people”, rather than “man”.)

[**John 15:13**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Solomon%208:7,6;%20John%2015:13;%201%20Peter%202:24;%201%20Corinthians%206:11;%201%20Peter%202:9;%20Romans%2012:1&version=KJV)

**Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.**

In John’s Gospel these words form part of Jesus’ closing discourse to his disciples, shortly before his betrayal and arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. That “a man lays down his life for his friends” was to be Jesus’ ultimate expression of love, in the hours that followed, as he walked the Way of the Cross.

[**1 Peter 2:24**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Solomon%208:7,6;%20John%2015:13;%201%20Peter%202:24;%201%20Corinthians%206:11;%201%20Peter%202:9;%20Romans%2012:1&version=KJV)

**Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness**: by whose stripes ye were healed.

1 Peter is usually described as an “Epistle” or “Letter”.

Many scholars however consider it to be a homily on the subject of Baptism and the ongoing meaning of the Sacrament for the Baptized.

Christ has died “in his own body on the tree”.

But: We…..being dead to sins…..should live unto righteousness.

[**1 Corinthians 6:11**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Solomon%208:7,6;%20John%2015:13;%201%20Peter%202:24;%201%20Corinthians%206:11;%201%20Peter%202:9;%20Romans%2012:1&version=KJV)

And such were some of you: **but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus**, and by the Spirit of our God.

In Paul’s letter to Corinth he almost falls over himself with metaphors as he dictates (probably to a somewhat overburdened scribe!) what New Life in Christ means:

Washed: Cleansed (after Baptism), purified, “pruned” (to use the metaphor of the vine and the branches in John Chapter 15).

Sanctified: Made Holy, increasingly conformed to Christ.

Justified: A term borrowed from the Courts of Law, where the Holy Spirit acts as “advocate” or “counsellor” for Jesus’ followers (an idea taken from John Chapter 14). The Baptized are “declared righteous” in Christ before the judgement seat of God.

This three–fold action of “Washed–Sanctified–Justified” served the Church well for nearly 1,500 years.

Martin Luther decided however that the order should be “J-S-W” and so helped fan the flames of the 16th Century Reformation. But that’s a story for another day…..

[**1 Peter 2:9**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Solomon%208:7,6;%20John%2015:13;%201%20Peter%202:24;%201%20Corinthians%206:11;%201%20Peter%202:9;%20Romans%2012:1&version=KJV)

But **ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation**, a peculiar people; **that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light**;

To continue the Baptism theme of 1 Peter:

Baptism is not a past event (like a graduation) but an ongoing reality (like a marriage). This is the context that Paul gives to Baptism (in [Ephesians 5:26](https://www.esv.org/Ephesians%205%3A26/)) when he talks of Christ sanctifying his bride, the Church, through the washing of water with the word. It is a means of grace which stays with you even through death. It is in Baptism that we are incorporated into Christ’s body, and it is for this reason that Peter can make his second point, later in his Epistle: “Those who suffer with Christ also share in his glory” ([1 Peter 4:13](https://www.esv.org/1%20Peter%204%3A13/)).

[**Romans 12:1**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Solomon%208:7,6;%20John%2015:13;%201%20Peter%202:24;%201%20Corinthians%206:11;%201%20Peter%202:9;%20Romans%2012:1&version=KJV)

**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service**.

Here we discern some of Paul’s early teaching on the Eucharist.

The truth of Christian life as a “living sacrifice” – made manifest in the Eucharist – is stated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11: 24-25 when he recalls that Jesus said “Do (*poieite*) this in memory of me.” The word *poieite* is a sacrificial word. Here the word *poieite* is translated as “do this” but is often also translated as “offer this” – as a sacrifice.

In Exodus 29:38, we read that one is to “*poiein*” two lambs on the altar. Over seventy times in the Old Testament this word is translated as “offer this,” or “sacrifice this”.

In AD 70 (about 15 years after Paul wrote 1 Corinthians) the anonymous early Christian writing, *The Didache*, said:

“Assemble on the Lord ’s Day, and break bread and offer the Eucharist. For this is the offering of which the Lord has said, “Everywhere and always bring me a sacrifice that is undefiled, for I am a great king, says the Lord, and my name is the wonder of nations.”

(The reference is to the Old Testament at Malachi 1: 11).

In this way, in the Eucharist, we offer Jesus anew to God along with “our own souls and bodies” (to quote the *Book of Common Prayer*).

To repeat Paul: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.”

 **Conclusion**

 In peace we will lie down and sleep

 **All: For you alone, Lord, make us dwell in safety.**

Abide with us, Lord Jesus

 **All: For the night is at hand and the day is now past.**

As the night watch looks for the morning

 **All: So do we look for you, O Christ.**

Come with the dawning of the day

 **All: And make yourself known in the breaking of the bread.**

**All: Amen.**



**A Poem**

Protect by Max Kear

(written for Children’s Mental Health Week)

I look out my window

gazing at the sky

the stars twinkling and blinking

saying “it’s ok”.

I let my mind wander

letting it look for the end,

wondering when I will see my family again.

Our key workers on the front line,

sharing their love,

we clapped and banged

for the ones we loved.

People raising money,

like Captain Tom Moore,

the man who walked

and then walked some more.

They saved us,

so we need to save them

 by staying indoors

to protect men and women.